

NEWS RELEASE

*United States
Department of
Agriculture
Southwest Region*

**Tonto National Forest
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www.fs.fed.us/r3/tonto/



**For Immediate Release
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Tonto National Forest begins fire restrictions

PHOENIX (April 26, 2005) – The Tonto National Forest will prohibit most types of fire or fire-causing activities across the south and western portions of the forest beginning Thursday, April 28, at 8 a.m.

An extremely wet winter sparked a tremendous growth of grass, brush and other fine vegetation across the landscapes of the forest's Sonoran Desert terrain. With rising temperatures and winds drying out this vegetation, fire danger is quickly climbing.

"This is really not a step we want to take so early in the year," said Acting Forest Supervisor Tom Klabunde. "However, we have to recognize how dangerous these conditions are and act now. Wildfires in grass and brush aren't like the forest fires we've had in the high country over the last ten years. They move incredibly fast and can be highly destructive."

The restrictions apply to south, southwest and western portions of the forest and include campgrounds, picnic areas and other recreation sites. All six of the forest's lakes – Roosevelt, Apache, Canyon, Saguaro, Horseshoe and Bartlett – are within the restricted area.

The restriction area begins where Arizona Highway 177 enters the forest's southern boundary. It then follows Arizona Highways 60 and 188 before looping to the north of Roosevelt Lake on Arizona Highway 288 and Forest Road 60 and then rejoins Arizona Highway 188 east of Roosevelt Lake. The boundary then follows 188 west to the intersection with Arizona Highway 87, then south along 87 to Forest Road 201. The boundary then runs along Forest Roads 201 and 393 to the edge of the Mazatzal Wilderness Area, and then follows the wilderness border west and north to National Forest Trail 11. The boundary then follows a series of Forest Service Trails east of the Verde River – 11, 269, 20, 11 again, and 17 – until it hits the forest border on the Mogollon Rim. Finally, the boundary loops back around counterclockwise along the forest border back to the starting point on Arizona Highway 177.

For a complete legal description and map of the restriction area, visit the Tonto National Forest website at www.fs.fed.us/r3/tonto on Thursday, April 28.

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Within the restricted area, building maintaining, attending or using a fire, campfire or charcoal burning device is prohibited. Restrictions also apply to smoking outside of a cleared area, operating internal combustion power tools, using welding equipment or any torches with open flames, operating any combustion engines without spark arresting devices in effective working order or discharging firearms except in taking game in accordance with Arizona hunting laws.

Petroleum-fueled stoves, lanterns and heating devices are exempt and may still be used within the restricted areas.

Violation of these restrictions is punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000 and imprisonment for up to six months in jail.

For more information regarding recreation sites and fire restrictions, please contact the Tonto National Forest at (602) 225-5200, or check online at www.fs.fed.us/r3/tonto.

For general information on fire activity and restrictions in Arizona call toll free 877-864-6985, or visit the U.S. Forest Service Southwest Region website at www.fs.fed.us/r3/fire.

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Useful Web sites

National Interagency Fire Center: www.nifc.gov

National Fire Plan: www.fireplan.gov

FireWise: www.firewise.org

National Incident Information Center: www.fs.fed.us/news/fire

Arizona Governor's Forest Health Council: www.governor.state.az.us/FHC